

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report of the
National Science Board**

June 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by 42 U.S.C. 1863(j)(1), I am pleased to submit to the Congress a report of the National Science Board entitled, "Science and Engineering Indicators—2000." This report represents the fourteenth in a series examining key aspects of the status of American science and engineering in a global environment.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
June 8, 2000.

**Letter to the Senate Democratic
Leader on the Patients' Bill of Rights**

June 8, 2000

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am writing to express my strong support for your effort to give the Senate its first opportunity to vote for the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights. It is long past time that the Congress acted to deliver real patient protections for all Americans in all health plans.

It is my understanding that the members of the Senate/House Conference who support a strong, enforceable, Patients' Bill of Rights have reluctantly concluded that the likelihood of an acceptable bill emerging from the conference is remote. After 8 months of inaction since the House passed the Norwood-Dingell Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act, and with very few scheduled legislative days remaining, it is time for the Congress to act to pass this legislation and give Americans the patient protections they deserve.

Congress has failed to pass this measure for years, and this delay has real consequences. According to a recent study, each day without a strong Patients' Bill of Rights results in harm to thousands of patients because insurance companies refused a patient a diagnostic test, a necessary procedure, or a referral to a specialist.

It is my hope that the Senate will approve this legislation today and take the next important step toward the enactment of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. I urge the Senate to put the interests of patients before those of the special interests and replicate last fall's bipartisan achievement by the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

**Letter to the Speaker of the House
of Representatives on Estate Tax
Legislation**

June 8, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I recognize that some small businesses and family farms struggle with the estate tax and am committed to working with you to relieve this burden. I am supportive of targeted, fiscally responsible legislation to make the estate tax fairer, simpler, and more efficient. I believe the alternative proposed by Representatives Rangel, Cardin, and Stenholm, which would exempt most small businesses and family farms from the estate tax entirely, promotes these objectives in a fiscally responsible manner.

We should not, however, turn our backs on fiscal discipline by passing a regressive, poorly targeted, and expensive repeal of the estate tax. If you send me a bill to completely repeal the estate tax, I will veto it rather than risk the fiscal progress that has contributed to the longest economic expansion in history.

The cost of the estate tax repeal would explode just as the baby boom generation begins to retire, putting at risk our ability to extend the life of Medicare and Social Security, pay down the debt, and meet other important national priorities. The full cost of this legislation is hidden because the repeal is phased in over ten years. Although it would cost about \$100 billion from 2001–10, the drain on the surplus would increase sevenfold to over \$750 billion over the following ten years.

Repealing the estate tax would undermine the progressivity, fairness, and integrity of the tax system. In 2010, the repeal of the estate and gift taxes would provide a \$50 billion tax break. But this estate tax repeal would benefit only 54,000 estates—about 2 percent of decedents—providing an average tax cut of \$800,000. Small businesses and family farms would receive a tiny fraction of the benefits of this proposal, while the largest estates would enjoy enormous windfalls. In addition, studies indicate that, without the estate tax, charitable donations and bequests would fall by \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year.

I would like to work with the bipartisan Congressional leadership to enact legislation to reduce the burden of the estate tax on small businesses and family farms, provided it is done in an overall framework of fiscal discipline that strengthens Social Security and Medicare, invests in key priorities, and pays down the debt by 2013. I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico

June 9, 2000

Mexican Economy

Q. President Clinton, do you want to say something about the Mexican economy? How do you see the development of the last 5½ years under President Zedillo?

President Clinton. I think President Zedillo has done a truly remarkable job. Mexico has had 5 years of growth, in excess of 5 percent a year, after the very difficult financial crisis in '94. And I think it's a real tribute to him and to the people he put on his team, as well as to the hard work and industry of the people of Mexico.

But I hope the partnership that we have enjoyed together after NAFTA and through

the crisis has played some role. But I think the great credit goes to the President and his team and the people of Mexico.

Mexican Election

Q. What do you think about the Mexican election?

President Clinton. I think the Mexican people will vote and make their own decision. It's interesting to observe. It's just like this election. I'm just an observer now. I'm not running for anything.

[At this point, a question was asked and answered in Spanish, and no translation was provided.]

Organization of American States

Q. *[Inaudible]*—just failed to get the support of the Latin American countries to get the OAS as a mediator in Peru. What do you think could be the role of the OAS supervising elections in Latin America without the support of key countries like Mexico?

President Clinton. Well, I think the real question that we all have to come to terms with is, what is the right thing to do now? And that's what we've been discussing. But over the long run, I think that the OAS still has a good future and a critical future. And I don't think there's any difference between the United States and Mexico in our determination to do whatever we can to keep democracy strong throughout the region.

And so we talked about it today, and it's a difficult problem. But I think the trend is good. You can't look back on the last 20 years and not believe that. And so we'll need some mechanism to monitor these elections and to be involved in an ongoing basis, and I think the OAS still has a pretty good future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:45 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.